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CEREBUS WORLD TOUR

COLUMBUS
OHIO
MAR. 25, 1995

(see back cover for details)

CEREBUS mothers & daughters 41

191
FEB

CEREBUS
NO. 191 FEBRUARY 1995

THE BIG

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MOTHERS & DAUGHTERS
a novel
•
BOOK ONE
(Cerebus 151 to Cerebus 162)
Flight
•
BOOK TWO
(Cerebus 163 to Cerebus 174)
Women
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BOOK THREE
(Cerebus 175 to Cerebus 186)
Reads
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BOOK FOUR
(Cerebus 187 to Cerebus 200)
Minds

MONTHLY

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For a long time, the direct market was supported by greed. A majority of sales was to speculators who were in the market to turn a profit on inflated back-issue prices. For a time, back-issue prices in the price guides reflected genuine dollar value. You would only get fifty percent of the stated value selling your comics to a dealer (this is pretty standard in collector markets everywhere) and only on the books that the dealer could 'turn around' in pretty short order. The standard payment for low-demand books was (and is) a nickel each. A lot of speculators were rich on paper and found, when they went to sell their books, that their five-thousand-dollar collection only netted them four or five hundred dollars. When *Wizard* appeared on the scene, a 'short market' evolved. Specific comic books, only two or three months old, went up in 'value' to ten or fifteen dollars. This worked for a while. Now a lot of books valued at fifteen dollars in *Wizard* are being dumped at one-day conventions for fifty cents. There *are* still books that a dealer will give you fifty percent of a guide price for, but they are very much in the minority. There was a great sigh of relief all the way around as the speculator market collapsed in on itself. What was ignored by almost everyone was that this made the comic-book market much, much smaller than it was widely perceived to be.

The retail community was unanimous in its verdict and its recommendation to its customer base: 'Just buy comic books that you like and enjoy reading. Speculation is a dead end.' Greed and speculation became a very marginal part of the marketplace.

What the retail community didn't take into account was that comic books were not very enjoyable to read, for the most part; by any measure, a vast majority of the retailers' stock could be classed as 'unreadable', their own recommendation working against them. They were (and, for the most part, are) misinterpreting what it is that they are selling and to whom. Most retailers have not read a Marvel comic in five years (with the exception of *Marvels* and a handful of others). Super-hero comics have changed out from under them, distilled to their very essence of 'adolescent male power fantasies'. Even that term exalts the material above its actual nature. What retailers are selling is mindless mayhem. What they fail to see, for the most part, is that video games are becoming a good deal more sophisticated. For three dollars, a twelve-year-old kid can participate in mindless mayhem, beating shit out of the bad guy. Traditionally that same twelve-year-old would have entered the comic-book marketplace. Now, with video games, TV animation and toys cluing in to just how easy it is to tap into that urge towards mindless mayhem (colourful costumes with lots of armour and spikes and big guns and muscles), comic books have unbeatable competition. Toys, animation and video games have one thing in common: they move. Comic books do not.

Let's call it sadism, and let's call it Phase Two.

Phase One: Greed doesn't sell comic books.

Phase Two: Sadism doesn't sell comic books.

That leaves us with the retailers' own recommendation: 'Just buy comic books that you like and enjoy reading.'

Their customers have taken this very much to heart. A customer doesn't go into a comic-book store in search of his favourite title anymore. Whatever his favourite title is, it has probably undergone three or four massive transformations in the last year. Once you change the basic underpinnings of mindless mayhem (this is what the costume looks like, this is the bad guy, these are the friends, this is the conflict), you are selling a new commodity. The average twelve-to-fourteen-year-old customer scans the racks and picks a few things that look 'cool'. For the most part, they don't find anything that they enjoy reading for any length of time. So next time they pick something else. Every week there is another selection of 'cool' covers to pick from. A comic book that doesn't sell out in a week doesn't sell out at all.

With a toy, with TV animation, with video games, the mindless mayhem is different every time out — *familiar* enough to maintain interest and 'brand loyalty' but *different* enough to keep them coming back for more.

While Phase One was welcomed by every level of the direct market, Phase Two is being ignored. The evidence is right in front of the retailers' noses: those comic

PICTURE

books that are genuinely interesting and worth reading and which have a loyal customer base are holding their own, moving up slowly in circulation or declining in sales at a slower rate than the rest of the comic books — those that are composed of mindless mayhem are on a very rapid decline.

Friends, Retailers, Countrymen:

My assessment comes down to this: if you have a large and stable audience composed in large measure of greed and sadism devotees, you need a large store (or many large stores) to service that demand. Once you eliminate greed and are unable to compete for the sadism audience, you are left with a very small core audience/customer base. If your retail philosophy, endlessly drummed into your customers, week after week and month after month, year after year, is 'just buy the comic books you enjoy reading' and seventy to eighty percent of the comic books you display every week are virtually unreadable (abruptly changing course and direction and structure and supporting cast and look and feel every six months), then you are selling your customers on something other than what you're selling. Aren't you?

The mindless mayhem that you're selling has to be sold structurally. With a video game, TV animation or an action figure, it's very simple. This guy is the good guy. This guy is the bad guy. They have a big fight. In order to compete, you would have to know the plot of every mindless-mayhem comic book that you sell. Every week you would have to lay the groundwork for getting your customers excited about the conflicts to come: when Thor joins the *Godwheel* title, whom is he going to fight? What are they going to fight about? You have to know the ins and outs of every super-hero title that you sell. You have to know two or three months ahead of time what the big fight is going to be.

Well, you can't, can you? Let's face it, the *editors* don't even know who is going to fight whom and what they are going to fight about.

Right now, as we speak, hundreds of thousands of dollars are being wagered by the retail community that what we are doing as a marketplace is waiting for the Next Big Company to come along — a company that will feature a handful of hot titles and instantaneous fan-favourite characters written and drawn by fan-favourite writers and artists. Every single issue of every single title will have the audience on the edge of its seats waiting to see what happens next. Hordes of twelve-year-olds will have their faces pressed against the glass a half-hour before opening time on New Comics Day, vibrating with the hope that the new issues of… whatever… have come in.

(Let me mention, parenthetically, that this is what you had with Image. Your resentment of these flashy upstarts was what compelled you to make 'just buy comics you enjoy *READING*' a universal recommendation.)

I was talking to a retailer a couple of weeks back on New Comics Day. His shipment arrived and he signed off with a 'time to face the hordes'. 'Hordes?' I asked, provocatively. 'Well,' he allowed, 'maybe one horde.'

No hordes. No horde.

Time to face the music. When a band finds that they have lost their audience with a 'new direction' second or third album, they start playing smaller venues. They don't book Shea Stadium, defiantly asserting that the ticket merchants are WRONG — there are far more than two thousand people clamouring for tickets to see them. If it takes three weeks to sell two thousand tickets, you cancel the tour and rebook in venues where two thousand people will look like a crowd.

It is accepted, for the most part, that there are too many comic-book stores for the size of the market we are left with, now that greed and sadism aren't as bankable as they once were. Most stores that are starting out are attempting to compete by opening in proximity to established stores and siphoning off business. The eighteen-year-old-and-up market is larger than it's ever been. The twelve-to-fourteen-year-old market is smaller than it's ever been. There is no miracle company coming to save the twelve-to-fourteen-year-old market. Comic books don't move. Video games do. Comic books don't move. TV animation does. Comic books don't move. Action figures do.

The demand for readable, interesting comic books is solid, but it is very small. It is getting larger slowly.

I was talking to another retailer who was making an observation that is nearly universal: how difficult it has become to sell new comic books even to comic-book fans. He sees a fan of *Cerebus* in his store. He shows him another title. 'Here, I think you'll like this.' The fan doesn't want to buy it. The only thing this retailer (and most retailers) have found that works is to let the fan take the book home and read it. If he doesn't want the book and he brings it back in the same condition, the retailer won't charge him for it. Invariably, the fan comes back and says, 'Wow, that was really good. Here's the money. I want to subscribe to the future issues in my pull file.' The success rate for this approach at the retail level is ninety percent or better. NINETY percent. This approach works better than a signing, better than a discount coupon, better than a flier, better than a full-page ad in a comics publication. Retailers KNOW which customer is likely to enjoy which title.

I call it the Elvis Presley Syndrome. When Elvis first went into Sun Records and wanted to record some songs, the receptionist asked him whom he sounded like. 'I don't sound like nobody.'

That's the problem that quality comic books face in the market.

We don't sound like nobody.

Terry Moore don't sound like nobody.

Jeff Smith don't sound like nobody.

The average comics fan and/or retailer would disagree with that. Terry Moore sounds like Dave Stevens. Jeff Smith sounds like Walt Kelly. By that reasoning, Elvis Presley sounds like Bing Crosby.

Uh-uh. Elvis don't sound like nobody. Terry don't sound like nobody. Jeff don't sound like nobody.

In Elvis' case it was a matter of getting copies of his singles to radio stations — mostly 'coloured' radio stations — and letting the record prove its point: Elvis don't

sound like nobody. I gotta git me that rekerd. That guy don't sound like nobody I ever heard.

Reviews and recommendations don't usually work. 'Should appeal to fans of *Star Trek* and *Elfquest*.' You can't sell a record by just saying how good it is. You can't sell a comic book by just saying how good it is. You play a record to show how good it is. You read a comic book to see how good it is.

'Heavy rotation' for a new single means that you play the ass off it on the radio and on MTV. The *Cerebus* Preview is like a guest shot on a network television show. One time exposure. Twenty thousand people get to see a new comic book — a big enough sample that (hopefully) they'll have an idea of whether or not it's their 'cup of tea'. It's still pretty inadequate — a couple of seconds out of Jason Lutes' album or Paul Pope's two-album set. It's still a lot more effective than the distributors' catalogues or the average store's newsletter which just reproduces the album cover or the picture sleeve of the EP.

The only place where the true equivalent of Heavy Rotation is possible is in the comic-book stores. A retailer is resistant to the idea of handing out reading copies of a comic book or letting customers take home a copy over a weekend. 'This ain't a liberty, kid' runs very deep in the veins of comic-book merchants.

But look at the analogy with a 'single' in the music business. If someone has heard a song — hears the song, in fact, every hour or so for several weeks — why does he or she buy the record, single or CD? Why is it that a customer, given a comic book 'on approval', doesn't come back the next day and say, 'Thanks, chump, now I don't have to buy it'? Because like a 'single', record or CD, once they own it, they can listen to it (read it) whenever they want. Why do we all watch *It's a Wonderful Life* every Christmas? We know the story, we know most of the dialogue, we know how it ends.

Quality. Quality, pure and simple.

The best comic books are the best advertising for comic books. NOT the comic books that have been made into movies. NOT the comic books that are best-selling toys. NOT the comic books that look like stationary video games.

This is a leap of faith, I know. The only reason I can suggest it is because times have become so desperate at the retail level that a lot of retailers are ready to try anything to save themselves and their businesses. The reason I can suggest it is that I am not telling retailers anything they don't already know. The success rate for quality comics 'on approval' (take this home and read it; if you don't like it, bring it back and there's no charge) is very, very high. Much higher than Yellow Pages advertising, fliers, coupons, etc., etc. It is a part of most retailers' business already.

The demand for quality comic books is growing. If there are twenty stores in a city and fifteen of them close down, the *Cerebus* fans are going to go to one of the five remaining stores to buy *Cerebus*. The *Cerebus* 'phone books' sell pretty well wherever they are sold. Stores that order a lot sell a lot. Stores that order a few sell a few. Stores that give customers a copy of *High Society* to take home and read sell more than stores that have the 'phone books' wrapped in plastic and taped shut.

The comic-book marketplace is very different from ANY other marketplace. Traditional marketing methods don't work here. Comics 'on approval' is the only system I can think of that has a high success rate in the comic-book field. And that system only works with quality — genuinely different material. As times become more desperate at the retail level, I think it only makes sense to move away from what *isn't* working and apply more time, energy and money to what *does* work.

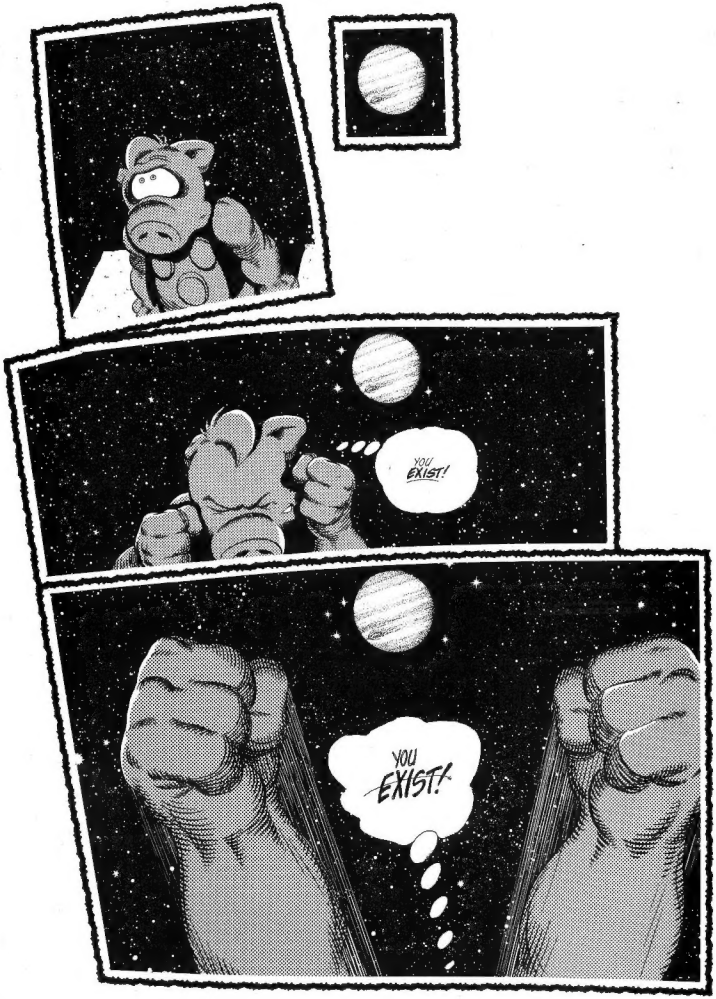
The market is getting dramatically smaller very, very quickly. None of us has a clue as to how small the market is going to get. I think it is safe to say that it will get smaller and smaller until the residue of greed and sadism is gone and what is left are quality comic books which are, in the retailers' own words, 'worth reading'. How many fans will be left? How many customers? Fifty thousand? Thirty thousand? How many stores will be left? Five hundred? A hundred? Fifty?

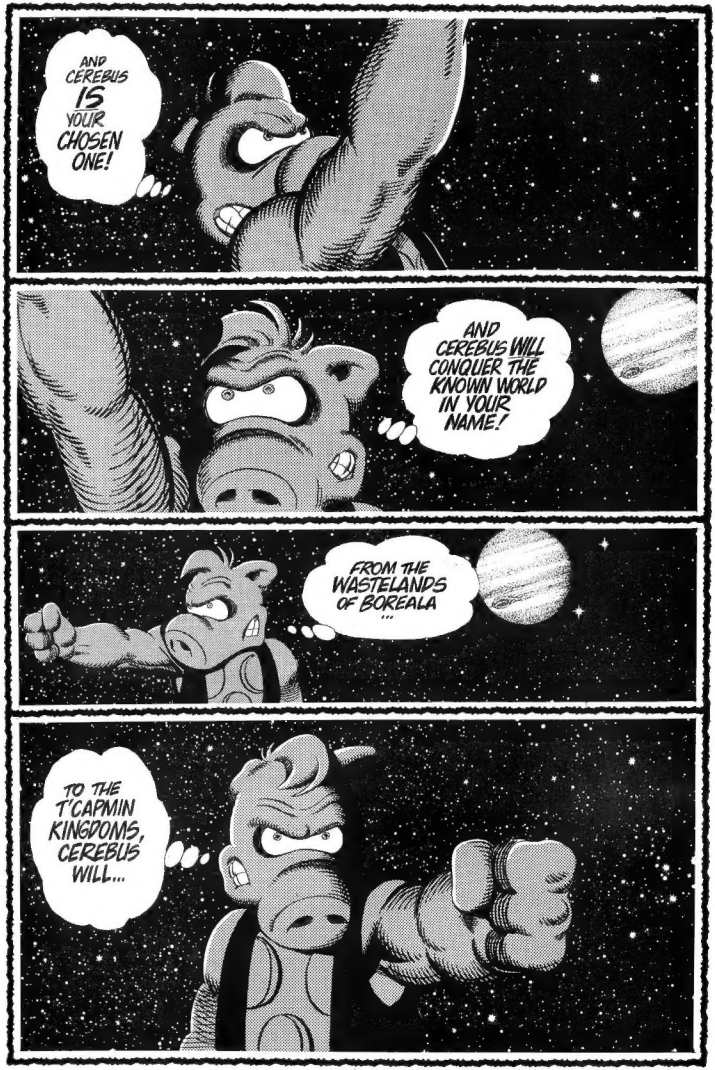
Will comic-book stores even exist at that point? Or will companies that function on a mail-order basis, like Westfield, become larger and larger as the geographic distance between surviving stores makes shopping by mail the only practical alternative for a customer contemplating a hundred- or two hundred-mile drive to his nearest store? The only given is that there will always be people who want to write and draw comic books and there will always be people who want to read the comic books those people write and draw. What exists between those two realities — publishing, distributing and retailing — in Larry Marder's words — is 'up for grabs'. Direct sales virtually wiped out the ID newsstand business as a presence in the comic-book marketplace and it did it in a little over ten years. There is no reason to think that we have arrived at a destination. The comic-book marketplace is a process, is mutating, as it has always mutated, to reflect the changing needs implicit in getting stories and art from those who write and draw them to those who want to see and read them. If millions of dollars being thrown away on splashy trade-show booths, dinners, full-colour multi-page advertising were an effective way of accomplishing that goal, the companies who indulge in such nonsense would have had a much better year. If bigger were implicitly better, then all of the small comic-book stores which are owner-operated would have been wiped out or bought up by mega-store chains in the last year. Instead, it is the chains of stores who find themselves in the most perilous position at the retail level, saddled with debt, dealing with crippling levels of inventory. Bigger is demonstrably not better. Self-publishers are in a much better position to weather the coming storm than are the large companies. Owner-operated (and particularly owner-managed) one-store operations are in a better position to weather the coming storm. Retailers who are willing to downsize their operation in proportion to the diminishing size of the comic-book marketplace, I think, stand a better chance of coming out on the other end more or less in one piece.

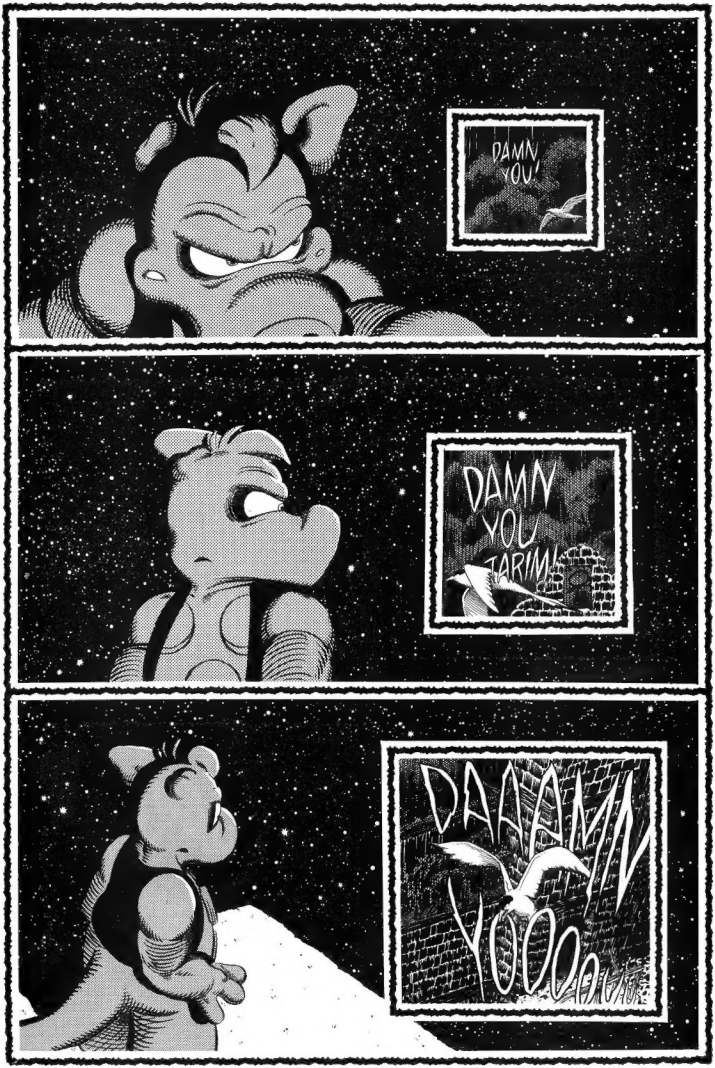
If there were some other means of promoting comic books that worked as well as letting someone take them home 'on approval', I would recommend it. But I can't really think of any. The *Cerebus World Tour Book* with eighty pages of comics for $2.95 will, I hope, prove useful in the same way that *Cerebus Number Zero* did: providing a low-cost incentive for people to try the book. Of course, I have the luxury of having eighty pages of out-of-print material to work with.

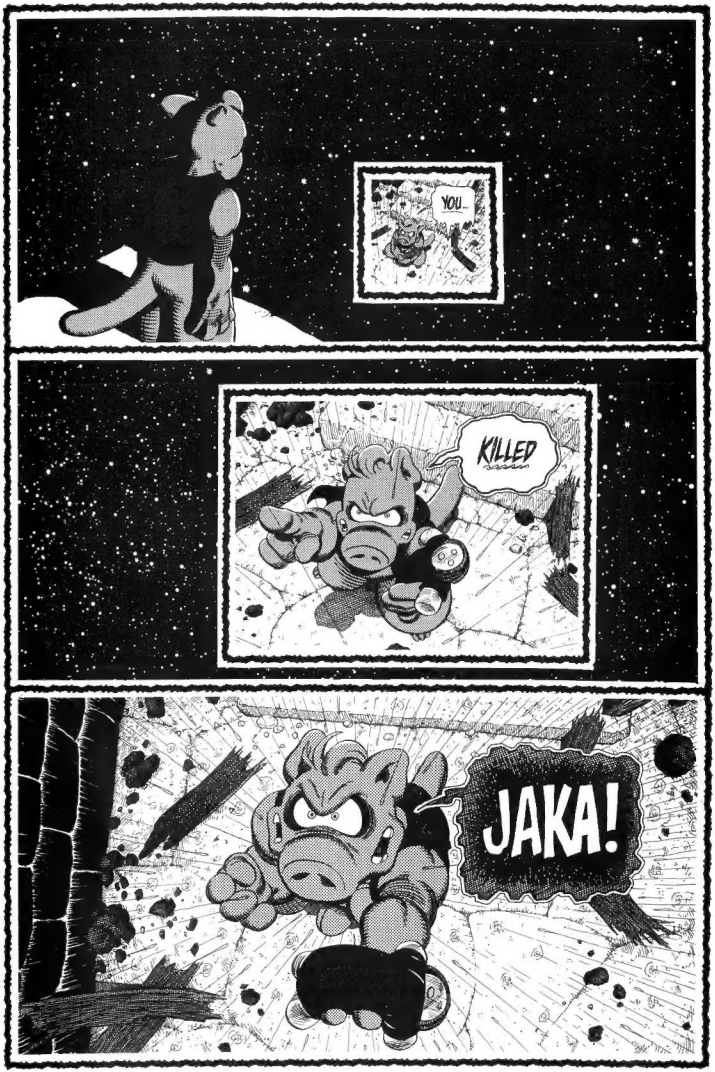
I wouldn't be taking this many pages in the front of *Cerebus* trying to analyze what's going on and offering the only solution I can see if I didn't think the situation was getting desperate or see the stores as 'worth saving'. My instincts tell me just to stay on the sidelines and see what there is left to work with in another six months or so. I *like* to think that retailers will recognize that mindless mayhem has had its day and that it's now time to start over again with 'comics worth reading', whether they are self-published, small-press or mainstream books — and recognize as well that it has been their own insistence on 'just buying comics you enjoy reading' which has hastened our arrival at this point.

I think that was the Right Thing To Do. I think the disparity between that honest sentiment and the actual content of the stores has to be eliminated if comics retailing is to survive in its present form.

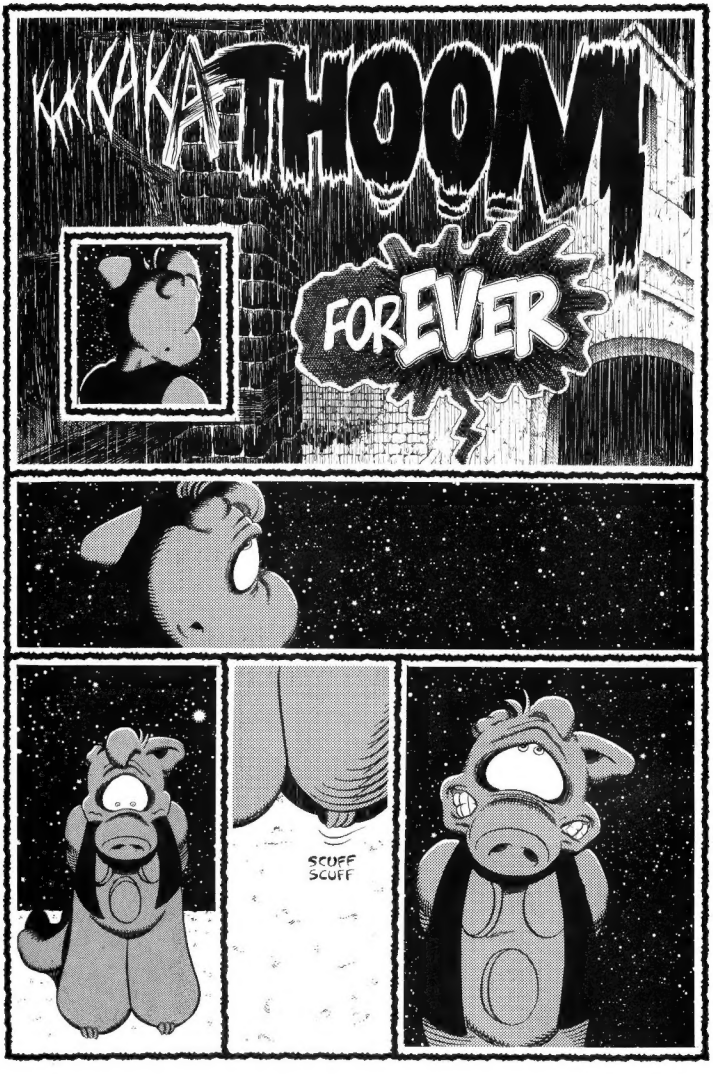

YOU EXIST!
YOU EXIST!

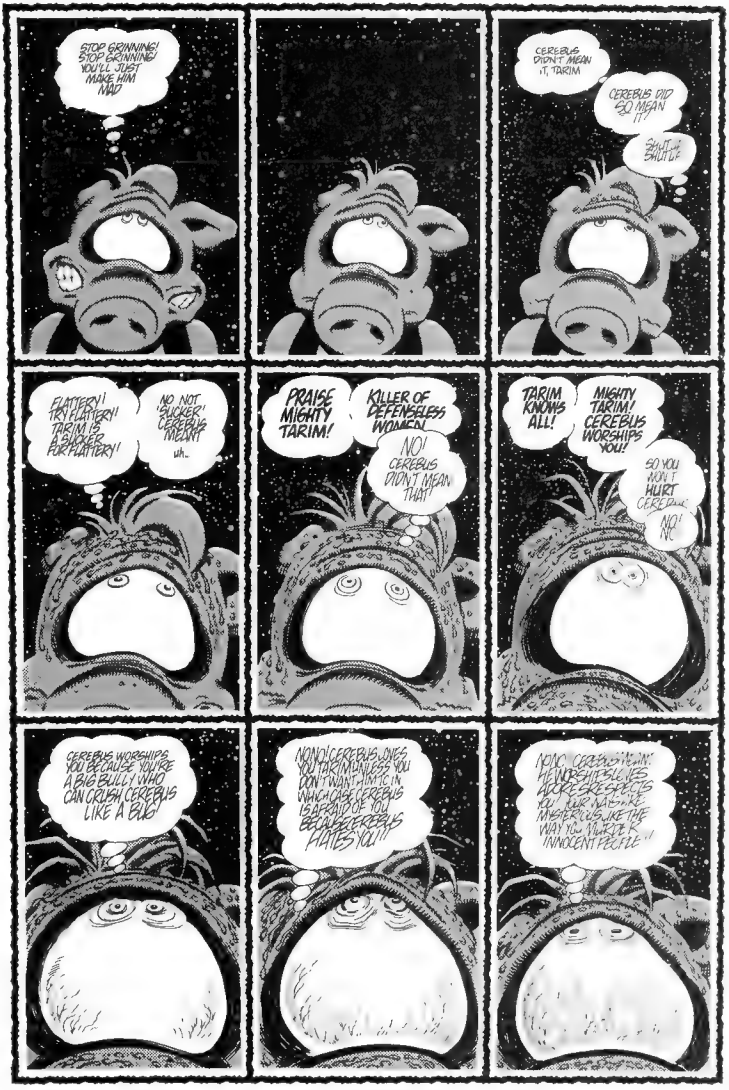

AND CEREBUS IS YOUR CHOSEN ONE!
AND CEREBUS WILL CONQUER THE KNOWN WORLD IN YOUR NAME!
FROM THE WASTELANDS OF BOREALA ...
TO THE T'CAPMIN KINGDOMS, CEREBUS WILL...

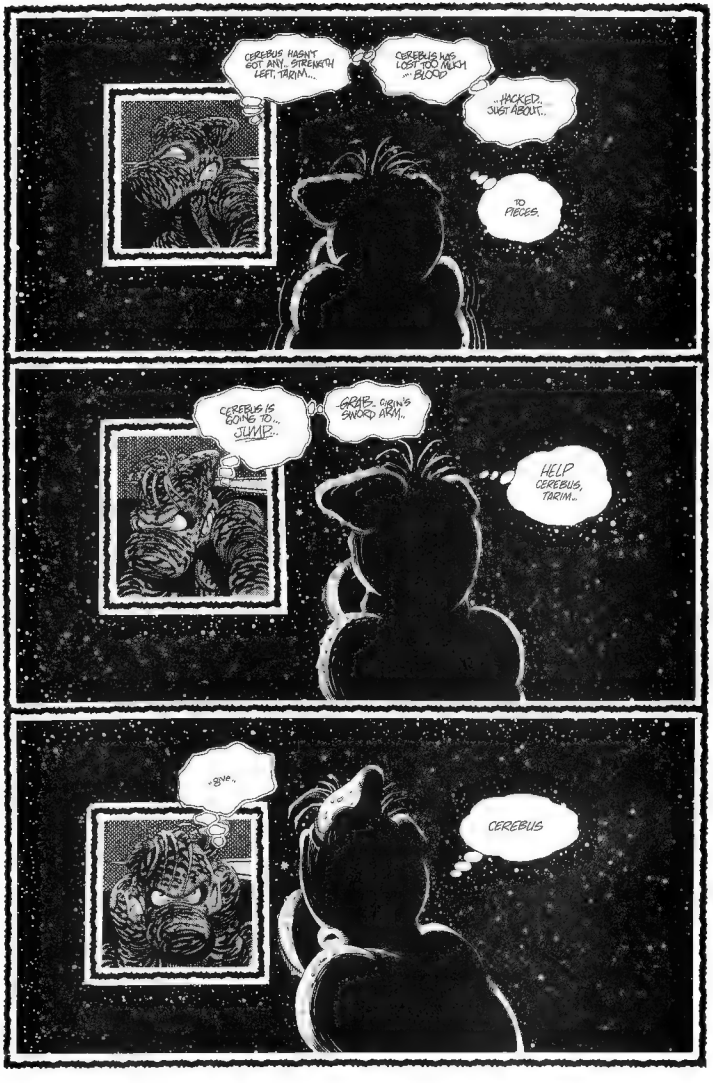

DAMN YOU!
DAMN YOU TARIM!
DAAAMN YOOOU

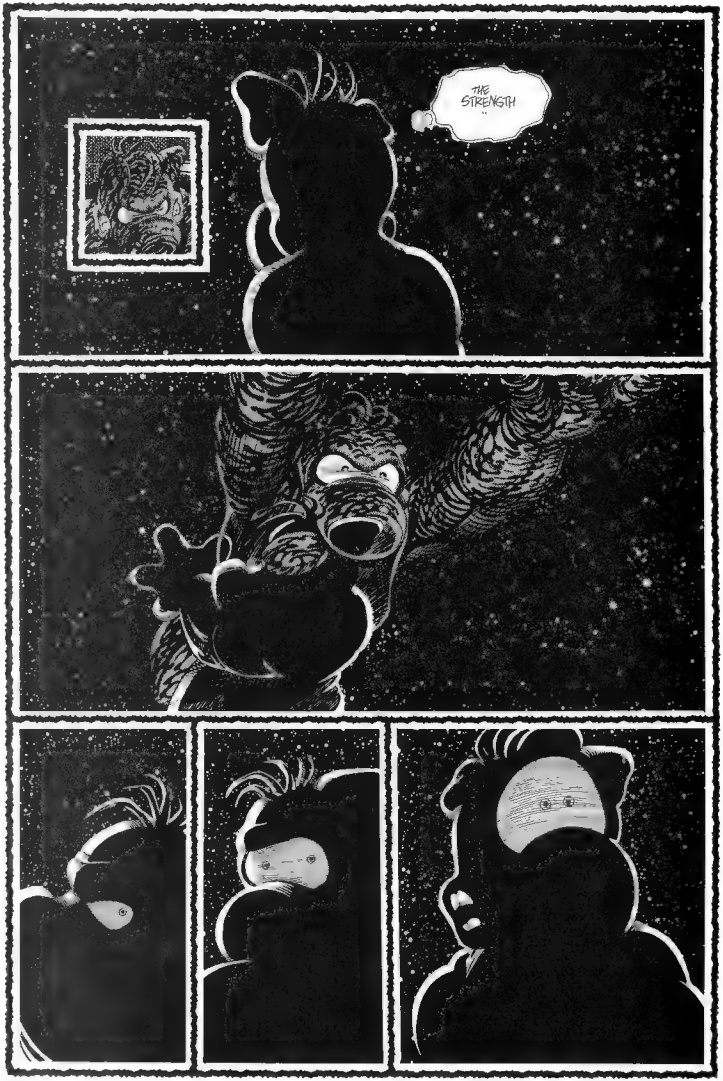

YOU...
KILLED
JAKA!

CEREBUS CURSES YOUR NAME, TARIM!
NOW
AND FOREVER


KKKAKA
THOOM
FOREVER
SCUFF
SCUFF


STOP GRINNING! STOP GRINNING! YOU'LL JUST MAKE HIM MAD
CEREBUS DIDN'T MEAN IT, TARIM
CEREBUS DID SO MEAN IT!
SHUT UP! SHUT UP!
FLATTERY! TRY FLATTERY! TARIM IS A SUCKER FOR FLATTERY!
NO NOT SUCKER! CEREBUS MEANT uh...
PRAISE MIGHTY TARIM!
KILLER OF DEFENSELESS WOMEN!
NO! CEREBUS DIDN'T MEAN THAT!
TARIM KNOWS ALL!
MIGHTY TARIM! CEREBUS WORSHIPS YOU!
SO YOU WON'T HURT CEREBUS!
NO! NO!
CEREBUS WORSHIPS YOU BECAUSE YOU'RE A BIG BULLY WHO CAN CRUSH CEREBUS LIKE A BUG!
NO NO CEREBUS LOVES YOU TARIM UNLESS YOU DON'T WANT HIM TO, IN WHICH CASE CEREBUS IS AFRAID OF YOU BECAUSE CEREBUS HATES YOU!!
NO NO CEREBUS MEANS HE INCREDIBLY LOVES AND RESPECTS YOU AND IN A MYSTERIOUS LIKE THE WAY YOU HURT INNOCENT PEOPLE!!

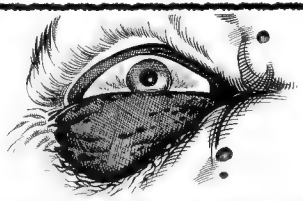

CEREBUS HASN'T GOT ANY STRENGTH LEFT, TARIM...
CEREBUS WAS LOST TOO MUCH ... BLOOD
...HACKED, JUST ABOUT...
TO PIECES.
CEREBUS IS GOING TO... JUMP...
GRAB... GRIM'S SWORD ARM..
HELP CEREBUS, TARIM..
-BYE..
CEREBUS


THE STRENGTH

Whose Single CRIMSON EYE Sees into Evry SOUL

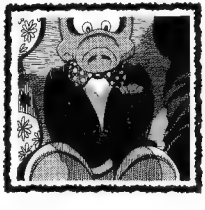
So VAST that ALL the OCEANS in ALL the WORLD

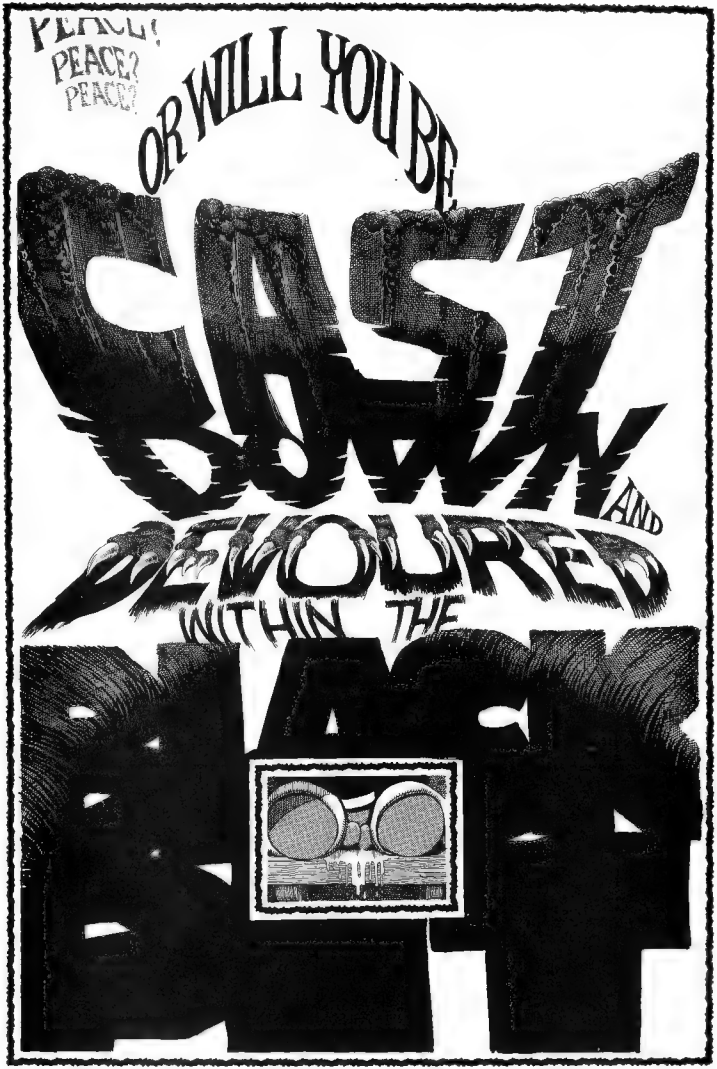
are!
TO HIM!
no more than
the smallest part
of the
smallest
drop
of rain



AND WHEN YOUR DAY OF JUDGEMENT COMES

WILL YOU STAND BEFORE
the LIVING TARIM
AS ONE WHO KEPT
HIS LAWS AND REVERED
HIS NAME? WILL YOU
BE REWARDED by an
ETERNITY
of JOY? and PEACE?




PEACE?
PEACE?
OR WILL YOU BE
CAST
DOWN
AND
DEVOURED
WITHIN THE
BLACK

SPIRITS of INDEPENDENCE 1995

LOCAL LIAISONS:

MARCH 25, 1995
COLUMBUS, OHIO
Paul Pope, *THB*
P.O. Box 3112
Columbus, OH 43210-0112

APRIL 15, 1995
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON
Drew Hayes, *Poison Elves*
P.O. Box 5844
Bellingham, WA 98227-5844

JULY 1, 1995
MANCHESTER, VERMONT
Steve Bissette, *Tyrant*
P.O. Box 442
Wilmington, VT 05363

AUGUST 12, 1995
WILMETTE, ILLINOIS
Larry Mardér,
Tales of the Beanworld
P.O. Box 664, Wilmette, IL 60091

SEPTEMBER 9, 1995
PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA
Don Simpson, *Bizarre Heroes*
P.O. Box 44326
Pittsburgh, PA 15205

OCTOBER 7, 1995
PHOENIX, ARIZONA
James Owen, *Starchild*
P.O. Box 40904
Mesa, AZ 85274

NOVEMBER 4, 1995
KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI
Richard Corben, *Den*
P.O. Box 8632
Kansas City, MO 64114

DECEMBER 3, 1995
KITCHENER, ONTARIO
Dave Sim, *Cerebus*
P.O Box 1674, Station C
Kitchener, Ontario
CANADA N2G 4R2

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Kitchener, Ontario, Canada N2G 4R2
Fax: (519) 576-0955

AARDVARK COMMENT

P.O. BOX 1674, STATION 'C', KITCHENER, ONTARIO N2G 4R2

Dear Dave,

You have no idea how much I enjoyed your 'thorough' answer to Robert Harkin's letter. It doesn't look like you are beating up on him at all in my opinion. I also see no reason that your answers to a letter can't be longer than a letter unless of course you don't feel like writing long responses. If someone can't stand you having the last word on a topic, they can always write back again; after all, it's your self-published book and you can do whatever you like in it. Usually I skim over the Aardvark Comment letters like his because they are boring, but I went back and read the whole thing because I was curious as to what would evoke such a long response from you.

Thanks,

Kathleen Gallagher
Caltech Seismolab 252-21
Pasadena, CA
USA 91125

P.S. A while back I met someone on a MVD who claimed to be Gerhard. The MVD was called Gateway and he asked me to describe myself in RL and if I was a "good looker". Was that for real? Was that person really Gerhard and does Gerhard really MVD?

P.P.S. Why the "Vanaheim" in Aardvark-Vanaheim?

Glad you liked it.

As to your P.S. I have no idea what an MVD is, but I can say with certainty that if Gerhard were ever on one, it would have to have been the first time. Just one of the legions of Gerhard wannabes I would guess.

As to your P.P.S. Vanaheim is sort of Estarcion's version of heaven or Valhalla, where good and dutiful Tarimites go when they die. In a more peculiar sense it is very much an allegory of self-publishing, i.e., a place for those who don't fit in anywhere else to go, a kind of safe haven for those who don't fit neatly into the widely accepted categories ready to hand.

So far, so good.

★★★★★★★★★★

Here's one, Dave...

Okay... so this is what happened... there was this African-American-Puerto-Rican-Native-American-Scottish-British-overweight-but-not-rhino-sized-female-avid-*Elfquest-Batman-X-Men-Icon* comics fan (Hi) listening to Fugees-Aerosmith-Soundgarden-Digable Planets-Bach-Gran-Combo-Coltrane-Oscar-de-Leon-Julian-Bream-Stevie-Wonder music on a Walkman as I rummaged through the comics shop. I/She stumbled upon the independents box in a dusty corner and bought several reprints of *Cerebus* labelled 'bi-weekly'. Later on, after ST:TNG, she/I sat down and devoured the comics for dinner with Swiss cheese and an Apple Quencher. *I loved it!!!*

Confused? I was, when I returned the next week to find that renovations were in progress at my local comics shop, and that all *Cerebus* brand comics had evaporated into thin air. So I put in an order to reserve any further issues of *Cerebus*. Enter #185. Woe (excuse me, it wasn't really 'Alas', more like Whoa!)! Hmmm.... Heh.... Hey!.. a thoroughly confusing, yet thought-provoking, interesting issue!!! [Fluff?! But I will not continue. Ms. Gerepkat has spoken what must be spoken. (Buffalo Bill?)] "Toto, I don't think we're in Felda anymore..." Expect many moons of back-issue orders from me. ("Oh, *now* you've done it, Dave! There's a psycho in the Aardvark coop!" Viktor Davis yells.)

Yes, *sing it*, Mr. Sim; **please** answer *all letters* **any fucking way you want!!!** To do so any other way turns you fake! Pyanfar, hand me the Alka-Seltzer, would ya? What kind of ink do you guys *use* in this thing anyway?!

Strangely here,

Tracy "Imp" Hartwell

6 Country Rd.
Medford, NY
USA 11763

Like Tracy here. Perfect example of an aardvark newly arrived in Vanaheim. Hi, Tracy.

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave Sim,

Perhaps you remember Dan Parker, the fellow who wrote to your letters column twice, about his efforts to get to know Meg Chase? (You even drew him a headshot of Cerebus at a convention last year, signing it "To Meg".) He hasn't written in a while, and I thought that I might fill in the *Cerebus* literary world with the unfolding events. Whilst Dan was so busy pining after the intelligent (excuse me?), absolutely gorgeous (if you like the type), and "really nice" (she refused to talk to him after seeing her name in the comic) Meg Chase in Sociology, he was not paying attention to me — the short, blonde girl in his Homer, Virgil, and Milton class.

However, he did think enough of me to loan me *Jaka's Story* over winter recess. After that, we began discussing comics on a regular basis — my favorite being *Sandman*. I found Dan to be sweet, thoughtful, intelligent, and charmingly romantic. Meg Chase was an idiot. I kept waiting for Dan to comment on the obvious — that he had gotten to meet **me** through loaning me a comic book, but apparently he only viewed me as a friend. It seemed just as well; we come from very different worlds.

We wrote to each other over this summer, and it was while meeting in Burlington one afternoon to shop for comics that I finally kissed the boy. We've been together for four months now.

The problem? I'm jealous. How come Meg Chase inspired him to such romantic pursuits, and I had to all but rope and brand him? I've hinted that it would be very sweet if he were to send in a letter about meeting me, but so far I don't think that he has. Well, you know how it is, Dave: "Tell a woman that you love her and she'll ask you to write it down so that she can show her friends." (I think that Edna O'Brian wrote that.) This is a letter to all of you guys who write in gushing about the girl who sits in front of you. Try looking behind you sometime.

Linda Faulkner
Castleton State College
Box 783, Castleton, VT
USA 05735

P.S. Dan, you deserve to have your name printed in the *Cerebus* letters column. I love you.

Isn't that cuuute? I don't know, Linda, maybe it's just that old male competitiveness instinct or maybe it harkens back to the quests and the crusades and such. If you don't have to climb a mountain or slay a dragon or cross a raging sea, how can she be the one?

Hope you guys are still together by the time this sees print.

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave:

Help. Ohh, shit. Ohhh, fuck. What am I to do?

ThisisacrisisDave. I'm trying on this self-publishing thing. It seems to suit me well. That ain't the problem. I have just recently completed issue 2, with a color cover, and begun the third (planning-on-calling-the-distributor-soon-thereafter), when all of a sudden something else very unexpected and pleasant has just happened. I started to dig this girl at work. She's beautiful. A real wildflower.

The problem? My priorities are slipping, and you know exactly what I'm talking about; 'nuff said. If I want to pursue her, I will be needing to spend a little overtime in my Romeo costume.

What should I do? I mean, I've gotta keep doing this book, man. Okay, okay. I know this isn't Dear Abby, or anything. But, Christ! This is the kind of riff-raff worth yakking about, don't you think?

Lost in Maryland,

Scott Berwanger
1100 Bellevista Ct.
Severna Park, MD
USA 21146

Very much so. Very much so. It's probably the most common story that I hear from you young-creative-type types. We all go through it. If you're serious about a creative career, then you'll just carry on with your creative career. She'll either accommodate herself to those requirements or she won't. If she doesn't, maybe someone else will. If someone else doesn't, then you get left alone and there's nothing better for creativity than being left alone. 'Pursue' sort of catches my eye. Better just to express your interest and see what her reaction is. If her reaction isn't, then you can get back to writing and drawing. As the ancients used to say, a Linda Faulkner is more suited to the creative sensibility than is a Meg Chase.

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave,

I am writing to you for two reasons.

Firstly to thank you (however belatedly) for using the photo I took of you and Ger on the back of issue 178. At present it is my most published photograph, which says something about my photography... (Or does it just say something about your comic?)

Secondly, as you may already have noticed, I have enclosed a copy of my band's first demo tape for you to listen to/put somewhere and never listen to again/throw away at some point in the distant future. It has taken us two years of "more off than on" Saturday afternoons to record, and now that it is out I have to admit that I'm pretty proud! However, somehow we have to pay for all the fun we had. (Isn't it always the way?) So, I was hoping that you would publish this letter so that I could tell all the world's more discerning comics readers/music listeners that MONUMENT (the band) exists, and that they can support self-published *music* by sending for my tape! (A STUDY INSIDE has four songs and costs £4. [Cheques payable to Constitution Music.] The music is... er... lyric/guitar-based stuff that probably tries too hard to be clever. You never know, you might enjoy it...)

Anyway, I wouldn't want to waste any more of your column inches when they could be filled with some exciting gender battle!

Yours with exceptions,

Tim Young
53, Ashbrook Road
Old Windsor, Berks.
SL4 2NE
England, UK

P.S. If you were wondering where the *Cerebus* connection is within the music, you will have to wait for our album and the song "This is not Vanaheim"... it's very R.E.M.!

Will *Monument* unseat *Zircus* as THE Aardvark Comment band of choice? Stay tuned for late-breaking developments.

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave,

I have always assumed that most (if not all) of the reason for the Catholic Church's edicts against abortion and birth control stem from the mundane need to increase the size (and hence power) of the church, rather than the proffered reasons relating to the sanctity of life. The "go forth and multiply" credo seems to be the common underpinning of many political and social entities, since increased numbers have always been the quickest and easiest way to increased wealth, power and influence (at least in a society that's not starving).

The latter half of the twentieth century has witnessed an ever-dwindling membership in (and hence power base of) the Catholic Church, so it is not surprising (at least to me) to see the Catholic leadership clinging desperately to their pro-life beliefs, in spite of the budding global awakening to the dangers of overpopulation. The Catholic Church will never bend from its current positions unless it sees that by sticking to the status quo it is ultimately turning more people away from the Church than it is bringing in. Once you distill out all the dogma and hosannas, I really don't see the position as being inherently male or female. Rather, it seems ultimately utilitarian.

How's that for jaundiced cynicism?

Regards,

Mark Peterson
4833 2nd Ave. S.
Mpls., MN
USA 55409

Doesn't sound jaundiced or cynical to me, Mark. I think people tend to minimize the Mother Superior side of the Church and the extent to which it has shaped a worldwide matriarchy which takes second spot to the male side of the Church only in the most cursory structural ways. Very much like marriage itself.

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave,

I feel (there we go: another emotional response to logical stimuli) like a stooge. One week after I send you my "why do you have a letters page?" letter, *Cerebus* #187 comes out with all of the critical letters (which you didn't answer, which was a class move on your part. Again, an emotional response). To make matters worse, #188 came along and you articulately, intelligently and reasonably showed why you answer the letters page your way.

Thank you for taking the time and effort to explain your methods without cutting us off at the kneecaps. I get it now, and I'll shut up and sit back and continue reading. And if I have something to ask, I'll be sure to do it politely.

Sincerely,

Mark Patterson
Comics Outpost
27 Granite Street
Barre, VT
USA 05641

P.S. Thank you also for the column a few issues back pertaining to store layout and focus. It was just the push I needed to rearrange my new comics racks and clear away some of the chaff. The results have been heart-warming and register-ringing.

Well, I don't really want to browbeat anyone, it just seems that every few years it becomes necessary to show that any formal structure for communication between author and reader is fundamentally flawed. I mean, first of all it doesn't happen that often in our society, so I've had to make up the rules as I go along, trying to balance what I want against what everyone else wants without looking like a bully or a wimp.

Glad to hear that your store is responding to treatment. I get a fair amount of mail from your customers, so you're doing okay with *Cerebus*, anyway.

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Mr. Sim,

A few days ago, I brought one of my English papers in to a conference with my teacher. While going over my paper, he informed me that I had to change the wording on one of my sentences because I described a girl as lanky. According to my teacher, it is considered sexist to describe a female in a paper because most people describe females in their writing but never describe males. I found this to be an odd thing to say because my whole paper was describing an old math teacher I used to have who happened to be male.

Needless to say, I kept the sentence exactly the same in my paper and received a B. Perhaps I would have gotten a better grade if I had changed the wording of the sentence around. Who knows?

My question is, what do you think of this?

Sincerely,

Derrick Belanger
19 Southgate Drive
Bedford, NH
USA 03110

They're still making up the rules as they go along, too. The problem in any 'feminist conflict' between unequals (teacher and student, boss and employee) is that the structure dictates capitulation no matter what you actually think — a kind of urge towards illusory consensus being better than no consensus. Schools are a real Alice in Wonderland of arbitrary rules and distinctions in this area. The answer is always the same, I'm afraid: stay and capitulate, or leave. You can't fight an illusory consensus from the bottom up.

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave:

Can writers self-publish?

Your latest Note From The President paints — I think — an unnecessarily bleak picture of a writer's possibilities in the world of independent comics.

Yes, any writers with a set-in-cement notion of their role in an independent comics project (My concepts! My story! My characters! *My* genius!) will spiral earthward quickly and dramatically in the world of self-publishing.

Ego can certainly *start* a project. And money can lubricate for some short while the sources of friction between artist and writer. But vision — *shared* vision between a writer and an artist — is the only thing that can *keep* a project from terminal floundering in those dark days when the orders for issue #2 flatline to a quarter of the title's premier issue — when paying printing costs for that very, very hypothetical issue #3 will require a feat of high sorcery.

As far as I can see, writers interested in self-publishing need to...

- find an artist who can share the creation of a world and character. An artist needs to have a genuine stake in both world and character creation. When working on *Strange Attractors*, Michael and I get together to jointly hash out

plot and character details. This activity is a major — and an intense — source of energy in the creation of our comic. It may be my script — but it's *our* story.

- avoid being territorial. Self-publishing is a weird, bohemian shtick well beyond the corporate field we know. If you're not comfortable sharing the creative spaces with another human being, if you insist on winning every skirmish over plot, character development, et cetera, then collaboration is probably not your cup of cold gruel.
- learn forbearance and patience. The pressures on self-publishers are mind-melting. Production deadlines, shipping schedules, holding down a day job while trying to keep an independent project going that (at least, initially) is going to be taking money *out* of your checking account rather than *bringing it in* are all things that can sour even the tightest relationship between an artist and writer. Learn to surf the stress or you'll get eaten alive along with your project. If your partner shmirx up on something, stay loose, stay frosty.

Actually, as you argued in an earlier Note From The President, good, valid work doesn't arise from business acumen — but from visions plain and simple. Independent comics entities like *Bone* and *Poison Elves* are not created by boards of corporate think-tankers armed with Harvard Business School marketing notions of what will capture various demographic targets. They arise from individuals with kooky overestimations of their own talents and worth linked with an appalling lack of knowledge about the likelihood of success for self-publishing projects. They arise blindly out of human desire.

Bands are probably the best metaphor for independent comics projects.

Right now, in garages all over the world, individuals of varying talents are tuning up their Strats, jacking into Marshall stacks, hitting an experimental paradiddle or so on the skin of a snare, and dreaming of gigging their way to total global media overkill.

Yes, most of them *are* mistaken about their chances. But the unlikelihood of success won't stop them from participating in the dream.

And a writer has just as much chance of connecting with the right artist as the fledgling Jimi Hendrix of the '90s has of finding his Mitch Mitchell.

So, I'd encourage writers — along with artists, pencillers, editors, letterers — to roll the dice along with everyone else. The comics medium needs writers. Badly. Needs people who can create characters and worlds that readers fall in love with and that open whole new ways of thinking about the world.

From where I sit – the risks seem worth it.

Thanks,

Mark Sherman
Writer, *Strange Attractors*
67 Emerald Street
Suite 623
Keene, NH
USA 03431-3626

Eloquently put. *Strange Attractors* is a good example of a workable collaboration so far, no doubt about it. Potential self-publishing writers, take note.

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave,

On November 4, 1994, *Cerebus* lost one of its biggest fans that I knew. A good friend of mine, named Steve, died on that day in an accident.

Steve was an extremely talented guy whose drawing ability always amazed me. He had dreams of being an animator, and unlike so many people my age, he knew what he wanted to do and was working towards his goal. He always told me how much he loved *Cerebus* and enjoyed it. It is truly a pity that he will not be able to see the end of the story of the aardvark he enjoyed reading about so much.

It was also very unfortunate that his work was never published in a nationwide publication and viewed by the world, as it should have been.

I have heard from several places that when you make a goal for yourself, you should write it down, as that makes the goal more "real" or something like that. I always thought it was kind of dumb, though, to just write it down somewhere without any meaning, you know? So I decided to write this letter to write the goal down, yet have it have some meaning, at least to me.

(Please bear with me; this will all make sense.)

I have always wanted to work in the comics field, but I have no creative talent whatsoever. So I was beginning to look into ways to get into companies on the business side of the industry, since I am much more adept at those matters.

Then Steve died. Now I have a reason to get into the comics field besides just wanting to.

So I make this promise, in writing, to myself, to Steve, and to the world. I will work until someday I am in a position of some influence at a comics company, and when that finally happens, I will arrange somehow for a comic to some way print one of the many sketches that Steve has made for me and, finally, his work will have been published. I do not know exactly how I will do this. I have only begun exploring the options available to me. Regardless, I will accomplish this goal one day. That is my promise.

Thank you for taking the time to read this, Dave.

Hopefully you will remember this, and someday when flipping through a comic, you will see one of Steve's sketches, and be able to say, "Damn, he did it."

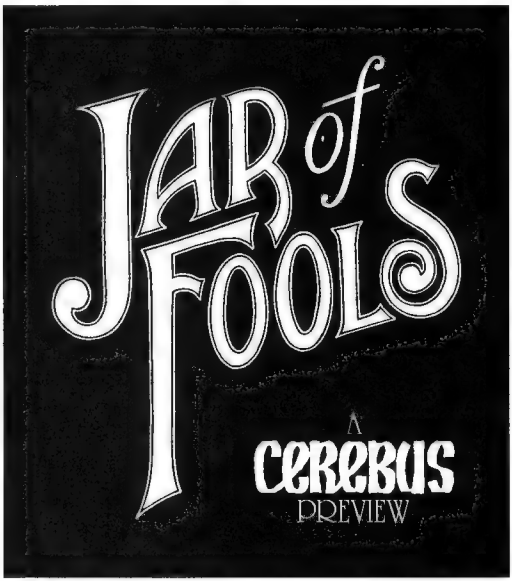
And, by the way, I promise one day to write a letter to you about the comic you do as well.

Till 300,

Tim Stoltzfus
118 Hitching Post Ln.
Lancaster, PA
USA 17602

1996 CEREBUS WORLD TOUR

SCOTLAND
IRELAND
FRANCE
ENGLAND
GERMANY
AUSTRALIA
AND MORE



I first saw this one a while back in photocopy form when Scott McCloud (yes, THE Scott McCloud) sent me the first batch of pages to ask if there was anything I could do to help promote Jason Lutes and his graphic novel. I guess I must have volunteered to do a *Cerebus* Preview because the ensuing pages arrived in stat form a little while back (including the custom-made 'header') along with an apology from Jason in case he was too late in getting it to me. He also enclosed a couple of copies of part one for Ger and myself, and mentioned that he has sold four thousand copies in a little over four months.

If Jason's approach to storytelling isn't unique, it is definitely exceptional, taking the enforced grid favoured by Alan Moore and Rick Geary (among others) and compressing it horizontally and vertically to alter the pace and emphasis of the story.

I'm kind of sorry that Al Flosso, the aged retired magician, isn't featured in the Preview, since he is easily my favourite character in the book. Of course all of the characters are very good, very well developed and defined in a few short panels.

When I phoned Jason to tell him I was running the Preview in this issue, I was hoping that he was finished the second (and concluding) part. He's about thirty pages in.

Drat.

So I'm asking all of you to order *Jar of Fools* volume one. If Jason doesn't have to worry about paying the rent, that means I'll see photocopies of volume two that much sooner. I can't wait to see how it ends.

Jar of Fools was published with the assistance of a grant from the Xeric Foundation, 214 Pleasant St. #351, Northampton, MA, USA 01060. For information on how to apply for a grant to self-publish, write for details (U.S. residents only).

JAR OF FOOLS
PART ONE
AN EXCERPT FOR READERS OF CEREBUS

Jar of Fools chronicles the maudlin exploits of Ernie Weiss, a brokenhearted, unemployed magician who can't seem to get his act together. Haunted by the loss of a lover and his brother's terrifying suicide, he struggles to find peace in a difficult world.

The following excerpt begins after Ernie has tried unsuccessfully to contact his aging mentor, an ex-vaudeville magician named Al Flosso. Ernie has just told his neighbor, Marie, that he thinks Al has escaped again from the retirement home where he lives.

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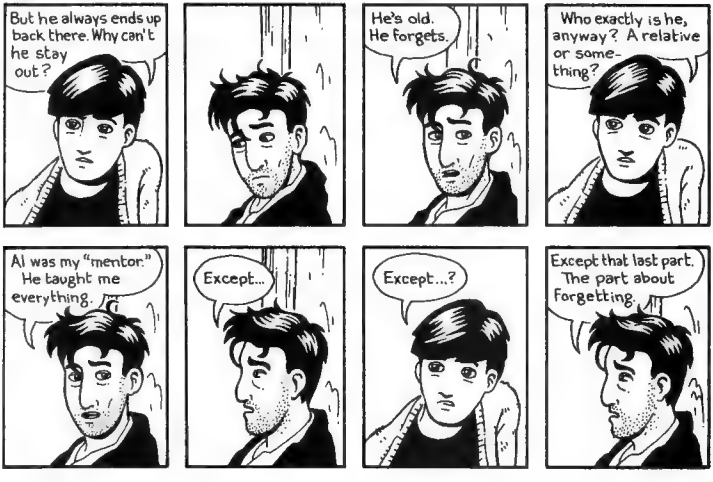

But he always ends up back there. Why can't he stay out?
He's old. He forgets.
Who exactly is he, anyway? A relative or something?
Al was my "mentor." He taught me everything.
Except...
Except...?
Except that last part. The part about forgetting.

You should get some rest. You look awful.

That's an unprecedented show of concern, Marie.

Yeah, well, savor it, pal.

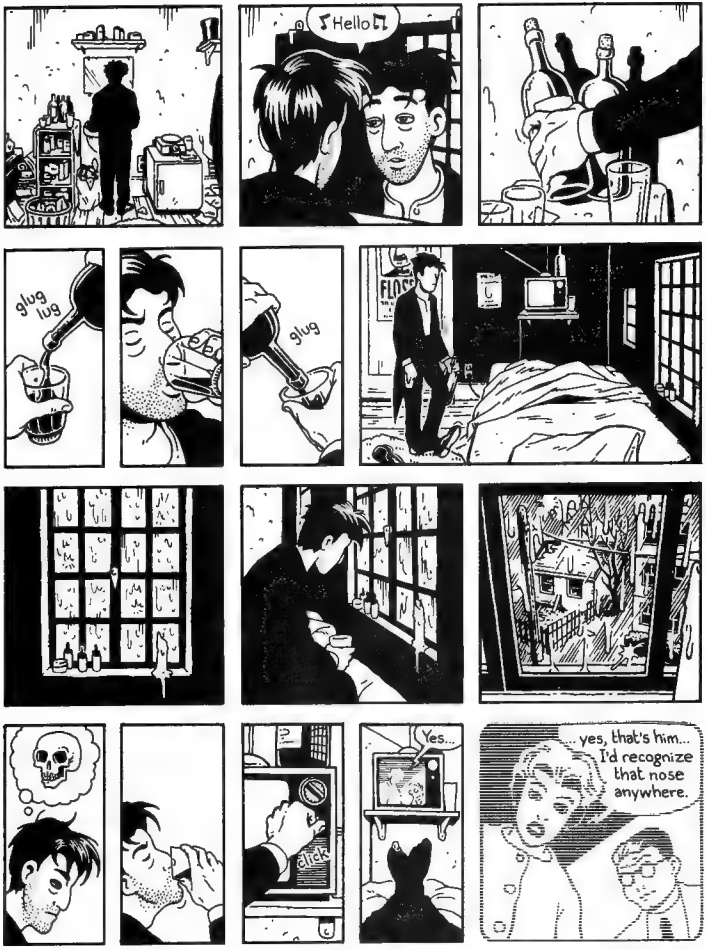
I've gotta clean up before Talia gets home, okay?

Get your sorry ass into bed or something.
3C
3B

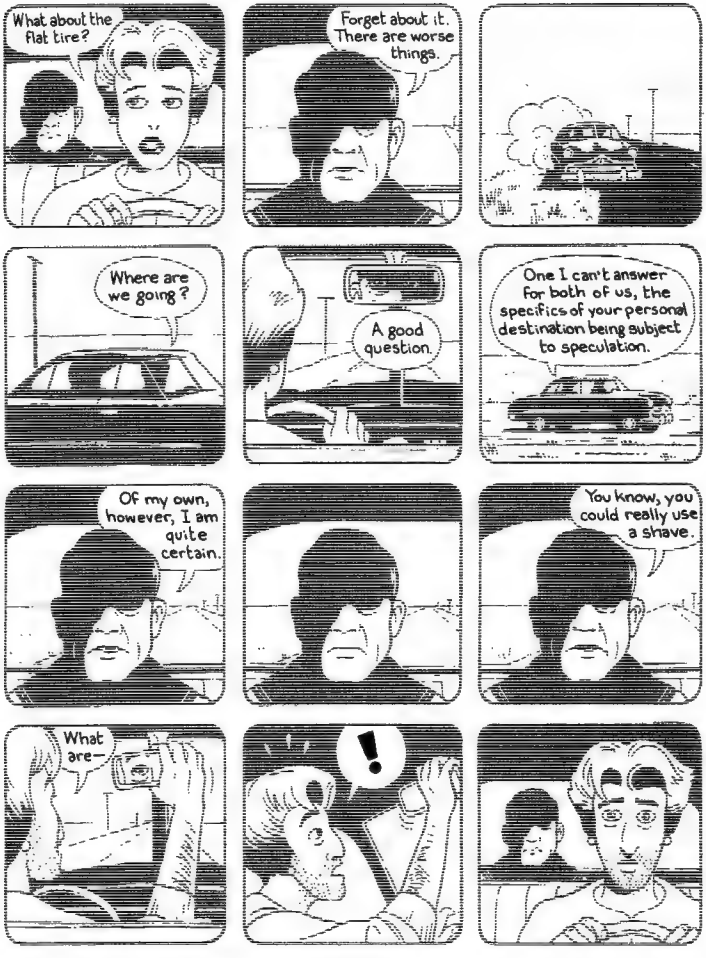
3C
3B

3C
3B

3C


♫Hello♫
glug
lug
glug
yes, that's him... I'd recognize that nose anywhere.
click
Yes...

Thank you, doctor.
Are you quite sure that you'll be all right?
Yes, yes...
Before you see the body, Miss Tetlow, I must warn you that radiation can do horrible things...
horrible things... horrible things...
BLAM!
Oh, blast it!
Good afternoon.


What about the flat tire?
Forget about it. There are worse things.
Where are we going?
A good question.
One I can't answer for both of us, the specifics of your personal destination being subject to speculation.
Of my own, however, I am quite certain.
You know, you could really use a shave.
What are—
!

I've got to wake up.
Excuse me?
Um... I said, "I've got to wake up."
This won't take long, Ernest. Just a pit-stop in the road of your life.
It's the least you can do, isn't it?
Nnng—
—GAH!
Shit.
Stop the car.
This isn't fair.
Fair...?
Who said anything about being fair?

Please let me out of the car.
I won't help you do this.
My ball and irons are in the trunk. Get them out.
No.
-hunh!
clink clink
Put the leg irons on me.
NO!
K-KLAC
KLAC
Thank you.
Now give me the ball.
Please, Howard-
-you can't do this! You don't know what this will mean!
But I do know, dear brother. There is a greater meaning here than you can see; this will be the escape to end all escapes.

No, Howard!
NO!
AAAH!
THE END
Thanks for watching the
Four O'Clock Movie. Stay
KNOCK KNOCK
tuned now for Channel Eleven News...
Orpheum
KNOCK KNOCK
Hold on, hold on, I'm coming...
click
FLOSSO
THE MAGNIFICENT

AT LAST! THE WHOLE OF DEADFACE FROM THE START - LONG OUT-OF-PRINT STORIES SIDE BY SIDE WITH BRAND NEW MATERIAL IN EVERY ISSUE !!!

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32 pages
MONTHLY

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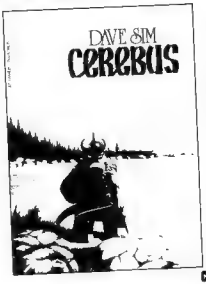
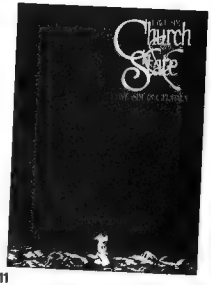
CEREBUS: THE FIRST HALF



CEREBUS reprints Cerebus 1 to 25
500 pages $25

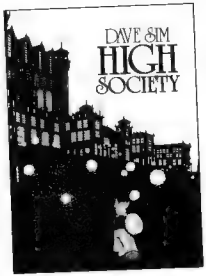
The Cerebus volume introduces the cast of characters including Elrod the Albino, Red Sophia, Jaka, the Cockroach (later Captain Cockroach with Elrod as Bunky the Albino), Lord Julius, President Weisshaupt and many more.



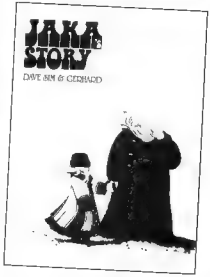
HIGH SOCIETY reprints Cerebus 26 to 50
500 pages $25

Cerebus gets swept up into the world of high power politics in text and runs for Prime Minister. Introduces Astona, Filgate, Blakely, the Regency Elf, Dirty Fleagle and his brother Dirty Draw McGrew, Duke Leonardi. The Roach becomes Moon Roach and Sergeant Preston of the Royal Mounted testan police.

CHURCH & STATE Vol. I & II reprints Cerebus 52 to 111
1200 pages $30 ea.



One of the longest single stories in the history of comics. Manipulated by President Weisshaupt, Cerebus finds himself married and then finds himself as Pope of the Eastern Church! Introduces Mrs. Henrot-Gutch (Cerebus' mother-in-law), Boobah, Bear, Bishop Powers, Bishop Posey, Mick and Keef and many more. The Roach becomes Wolveroach and the Secret Sacred Wars Roach. Also, in volume II, is the Flaming Carrot cross-over.



JAKA'S STORY reprints Cerebus 114 to 136
500 pages $25

Cerebus returns to find his life in ruins and ends up as a houseguest of the love of his life, Jaka, and her new husband Rick. Introduces Oscar the poet, Pud, the tavern-owner, and Mrs. Thatcher.

MELMOTH reprints Cerebus 139 to 150
250 pages $17

Cerebus, mistakenly believing that Jaka is dead, takes up residence in Dino's Cafe, clutching Jaka's childhood doll, Missy and his sword. The other half of the story is a faithful retelling of the last days of Oscar Wilde. The Roach becomes normalroach. Introduces Doris, Dino, Janice, Robbie and Reggie. Cameo appearances by Mick and Keef.

and

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(reprinting the 'in-between' stones from Cerebus 51, 112/113 and 137-138) ($2.25)

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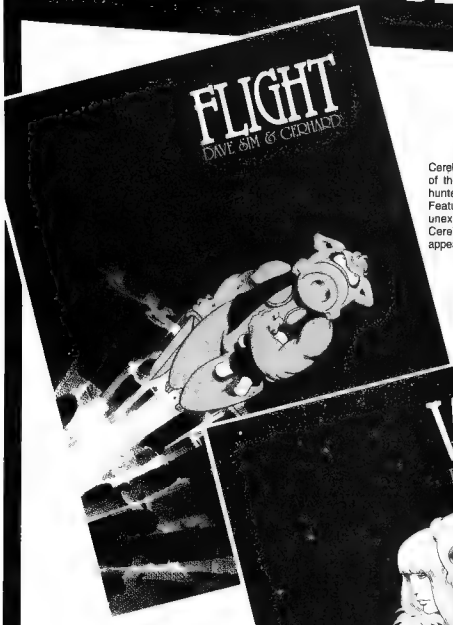
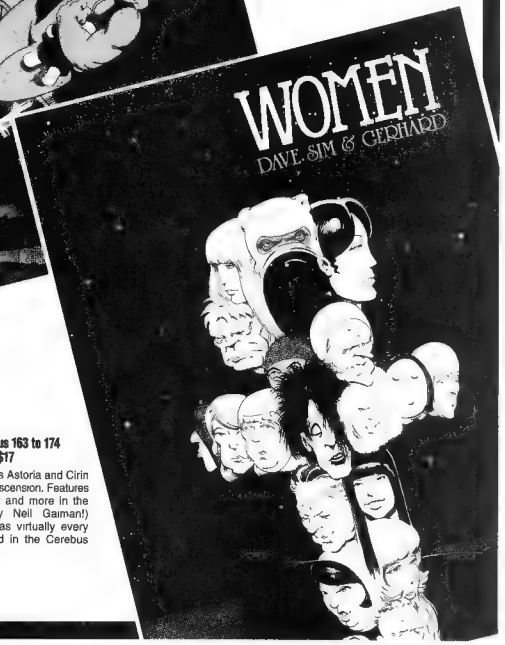
THE SECOND HALF BEGINS HERE



FLIGHT reprints Cerebus 151 to 162
250 pages $17

Cerebus explodes into action in the second half of the 300 issue story-line. Trapped in lest, hunted by the Cirinists, Cerebus battles back Featuring Punisherroach as well as the unexpected reappearance of many early Cerebus characters, including the first (visual) appearance of Suenteus Po!



WOMEN reprints Cerebus 163 to 174
250 pages $17

The second half continues as Astoria and Cirin contend for the fabled Final Ascension. Features Swoon, Snuff, Sleaze, Sulk and more in the highly-acclaimed (even by Neil Gaiman!) Sandman parody, as well as virtually every female character introduced in the Cerebus storyline to date.

BULLETINS...11 JANUARY 95...BULLETINS...11 JANUARY EVAN DORKIN (MILK & CHEESE) WILL BE AT CHICAGO STOP ...BILL TUCCI (SHI) WILL BE AT PITTSBURGH STOP... STEVE BISSETTE (TYRANT)WILL BE AT COLUMBUS MANCHESTER CHICAGO PITTSBURGH KANSAS CITY KITCHENER...APE II RE SCHEDULED TO 13 MAY 95 SAN JOSE 800-866-8929 FOR DE TAILS...REVLON LAWYER'S IRATE GIRL-FRIEND LEAKS WORD OF HEROES WORLD ACQUISITION TO CAPITAL AND DIAMOND CONFIRMING REPEAT CONFIRMING MARVEL'S INTENTION TO MAKE HEROES WORLD EXCLUSIVE DISTRIBUTOR OF MARVEL PRODUCT...SMITH BARNEY INVESTMENT BULLETIN DOWNGRADES MARVEL STOCK TO 'UNDERPERFORM' FROM 'NEUTRAL' AS OF 21 DEC...AUSTIN TABLES SOLD OUT SIX WEEKS AHEAD OF SHOW DATE...TABLES AVAILABLE FOR REMAINING DATES... PITTSBURGH AND SEATTLE ALMOST SOLD OUT...NEW BACK ISSUE SMALL PRESS DISTRIBUTOR: COLD CUT DIST 5704 CALMOR AVE #1 SAN JOSE CALIF 95123...RECOMMENDED: JOE CHIAPETTA'S SILLY DADDY (GN) 7.95 USA 10.35 CAN 2209 NORTHGATE N. RIVERSIDE IL 60546...ALEX GRECIAN'S LITTLE REMAINS 24 HR. COMIC 2.00 5230 SW 20TH TERR #302 TOPEKA KS 66604...WATCH FOR: BC BOYER HILLY ROSE'S SPACE ADVENTURES IN MAY (3 ISSUES COM PLETED) PREMIER AT APE II...BETHESDA MD SMALL PRESS EXPO SCHEDULED FOR 23 JUNE 95 RAMADA INN 8400 WISCONSIN AVE TABLES 15 DOLLARS FOR DETAILS CONTACT JON COHEN 301-840-0520 GERHARD AND I WILL ATTEND... CEREBUS ORIGINAL ARTWORK AVAILABLE AT ALL SPIRITS STOPS. RULES: $100 PER PAGE. NO HAGGLING. NO DISCOUNT ON QUANTITY PURCHASE. NO PHONE OR MAIL ORDERS. VISA & MC PREFERRED CASH ACCEPTED....BULLETINS...11 JAN

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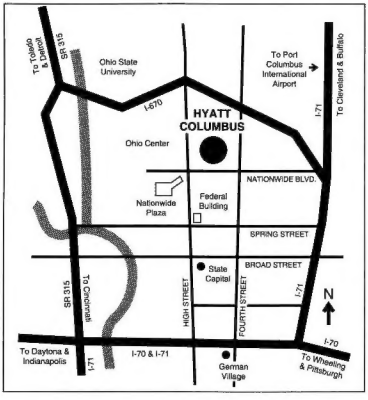

FROM COLUMBUS AIRPORT

Depart Airport to James Road left on James to Broad Street, right on Broad Street to Fourth Street, right on Fourth Street to Nationwide Blvd. Turn left on to Nationwide Blvd. The Hyatt Regency Columbus will be on your right.

I-70 WESTBOUND & I-70 EASTBOUND

Exit off Fourth Street, one way going north. Follow Fourth Street 15 blocks. Turn left on to Nationwide Blvd. The Hyatt Regency Columbus will be on your right.

I-71 SOUTHBOUND

Exit off Spring Street to the left of the freeway. Follow Spring Street one way going west to Fourth Street. Turn right on Fourth Street to Nationwide Blvd. Turn left on Nationwide Blvd. The hotel is one block north on Nationwide Blvd. and High Street.

I-71 NORTHBOUND

Connect to 70 east, follow to Fourth Street. Exit off of Fourth Street, one way going north. Follow Fourth Street 15 blocks. Turn left on to Nationwide Blvd. The Hyatt Regency Columbus will be on your right.

COLUMBUS, OHIO

Once again, the map isn't the best in the world (in fact, it's even worse than last time owing to the fact that I threw away all of the little Hyatt brochures the hotel was kind enough to send after we got the colour photo for the back cover — this one is from the back of our room confirmation sheet), but it should give you an idea of where to find the event.

The local liaison is:

Paul Pope
HORSE PRESS
P.O. Box 3112, Columbus, Ohio 43210-0112

The Retailer du Jour is Steve Snyder of CENTRAL CITY COMICS who is certainly the most vocal proponent of the small press in recent memory. Once again, he will be putting together two or three tables of self-published, small press and mini-comic material as well as an assortment of 'cutting edge' mainstream material. The decision of the judge is final, and that's Steve, so you can pitch him on carrying your work by sending sample copies to:

Steve Snyder
CENTRAL CITY COMICS
1460 Bethel Road, Columbus, Ohio 43220
(614) 459-5045

Just like John Christian in Texas, you can send flyers to Steve at the above address and we'll have them at the door for easy picking and he'll also be providing the admission table staff. Very much appreciated.

Unfortunately, I forgot to touch base with Paul about lower priced accommodations, so everyone is just going to have to find the nearest Holiday Inn or Ramada Inn on their own.

★★★★★★★★★★

After shopping around for a likely candidate to serve as venue for the Apres Event party, Paul made the excellent point that, in the interests of Keep It Simple, Stupid, it would be easiest to just congregate in the sports bar at the Hyatt, so that's what we're going to do. As long as we all buy some food and a few drinks I'm sure we'll be welcome to doodle our sketches and just hang out for a few hours.

★★★★★★★★★★

As of this writing, there are still a few tables available (this is being written January 8), but going by the reaction to Austin there is going to be a rush of last minute reservations about five weeks ahead of time. Don't say I didn't warn you. Tables are fifteen dollars each, cheque or money order payable to:

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Kitchener, Ontario, Canada
N2G 4R2
FAX: (519) 576-0955

Likewise for booking tables for the future SPIRITS OF INDEPENDENCE April 15: Seattle, Washington... July 1: Manchester, Vermont... August 12: Chicago, Illinois... September 9: Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania... November 4: Kansas City, Missouri... December 3 (please note changed date): Kitchener, Ontario.

COLUMBUS OHIO

MARCH 25, 1995 10am to 5pm

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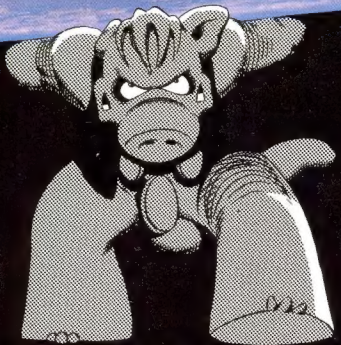
CEREBUS



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more information on inside back cover